

Washington, DC -- Legislation sponsored by U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) to bring economic development resources to Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga and Herkimer counties passed the House of Representatives this afternoon with strong bipartisan support.

“This is a great day for businesses and families in Upstate New York,” **said Arcuri**. “Passage of the Northern Border Regional Commission is a victory for our region – bringing much-needed federal resources to help create new jobs and economic growth in Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga and Herkimer counties. Projects will be determined by local needs and priorities – not dictated by Washington – making sure local economic growth is based in local communities.”

The legislation, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3246), authorizes the creation of five regional economic development commissions under a common framework of administration and management. These commissions are designed to address problems of systemic underdevelopment in their respective regions. The five commissions are: the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Commission, the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, and the Southwest Border Regional Commission.

The Northern Border Regional Commission would be modeled after the successful Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which provides economic development assistance to Broome, Chenango, Ontario, Cortland, Tioga, Tompkins and Otsego Counties. Since its creation, the ARC has reduced the number of distressed counties in its region from 219 to 100, cut the poverty rate from 31% to 15%, and helped 1,400 businesses create 26,000 new jobs.

The Northern Border Regional Commission would be charged with investing \$40 million each year in federal resources for economic development and job creation in the most economically-distressed border areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. In New York State, the Northern Border Regional Commission would directly benefit Oneida, Cayuga, Herkimer and Seneca Counties.

The Commission would utilize the successful ARC approach, where local development districts and other non-profits bring project ideas and priorities to the commission from the local level, making sure actions reflect both local needs and regional economic development goals. It also ensures that states have a deciding voice in the investment made within their borders.

The commission would create a federal-state partnership to promote development through regional planning, technical assistance, and funding of projects aimed at encouraging economic prosperity.

Projects would include transportation infrastructure, broadband development, alternative energy projects, agricultural development, health care facilities and other needs as determined by local communities.

H.R. 3246 has been referred to the Senate. Arcuri and others will work aggressively to ensure that the Senate takes action on this critical legislation.

As a member of the House Rules Committee, Arcuri managed debate on the resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 3246. A copy of Arcuri's remarks is included below.

The Honorable Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24)
In the House of Representatives
Rule Providing for Consideration of H.R. 3246
Opening Statement

M. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules I call up House Resolution 704 and ask for its immediate consideration.

M. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, Mr. Hastings. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have five legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials into the Record.

Thank you, M. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

M. Speaker, House Resolution 704 provides for consideration of H.R. 3246, the "Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007. The rule provides one hour of debate

equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

M. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule and H.R. 3246. I want to thank the distinguished Chairwoman of the Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management Subcommittee, Ms. Norton, Chairman Oberstar, and the Ranking Members for drafting this legislation to authorize three new economic development commissions. H.R. 3246 establishes the Northern Border, Southeast Crescent, and Southwest Border Regional Commissions and reauthorizes the successful Delta and Northern Great Plains Regional Commissions. These five Commissions will help bring economic development to regions of our country that desperately need it.

M. Speaker, this bipartisan legislation creates a Northern Border Regional Commission that will bring much-needed job creation and economic development resources to the Northeast region. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Upstate New York will all benefit tremendously from the establishment of this Commission because it will assess and address the very specific needs, assets, and challenges of the region.

Over the last several decades, Upstate New York, including my Congressional district, has experienced a consistent pattern of economic distress resulting from substantial losses in the manufacturing sector, coupled with an aging infrastructure and lack of opportunities for a skilled workforce. My district alone has seen a staggering loss of more than 14,000 manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2005. This has been devastating to our local communities. However, this loss isn't an anomaly, it is extremely characteristic of several states in the Northeast. A targeted regional approach, like the one created by this bill, can help bring back economic vitality to these regions.

M. Speaker, the three new Commissions are modeled after the highly successful Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The Commissions, similar to the A-R-C, will create federal-state partnerships where local development districts and other non-profits bring project ideas and priorities from the local level to the Commissions to promote economic development.

Specifically, the Northern Border Regional Commission will be charged with investing \$40 million dollars per year — rising to \$60 million per year by 2012 — in federal grants focused on local transportation infrastructure projects, broadband development, alternative energy projects, agricultural development, and health care facilities. With regional planning, technical assistance,

and funding of projects aimed at encouraging economic prosperity, this Commission will help local communities work together to support common development goals.

Simply put, the numbers speak for themselves. Since its creation, the A-R-C has reduced the number of distressed counties in its region from 219 to 100, cut the poverty rate from 31 percent to 15 percent, and has helped 1,400 businesses create 26,000 new jobs. In Fiscal Year 2005, each dollar of A-R-C funding leveraged \$2.57 in other public funding and \$8.46 in private funding.

Speaking from personal experience, six counties in my Upstate New York district have experienced similar success. The Village of Sherburne in Chenango County is a great example of how small A-R-C grants are extremely helpful in leveraging funds from state, local, and private sources for economic development initiatives that create jobs. A \$200,000 A-R-C grant to improve aging water infrastructure in Sherburne – a problem that is plaguing many states in the Northeast – was able to leverage close to \$4 million in state and local community investment.

M. Speaker, the Northern Border Regional Commission will not only extend benefits to economically distressed counties in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. It will give Upstate New York counties like Oneida, Herkimer, Cayuga and Seneca the opportunity to enjoy the same benefits their neighboring counties in the Southern Tier enjoy under the A-R-C. We need to ensure that every American has access to job training, employment-related education, and high-tech infrastructure, so that we can retain and grow our global competitive edge. I am confident the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act will help us achieve that end.

Thank you, I reserve the balance of my time.

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